



### Customer Focus

A 1026-home River Walk development was slated for development in Pohatcong Township, Warren County. However, with the help of FPP, 564 acres of farmland were protected. The River Walk Farm, contains not only valuable farmland soils but also has significant ecological value to the region.

"This farm lies within a highly viable agricultural as well as ecological area. . . Over 90 percent of the farm's soils are listed as prime, unique or of statewide importance, and it is home to four grassland nesting bird species on the State's threatened and endangered species list," says Wayne Maresch, former NRCS State Conservationist.

The 564-acre tract is the largest purchase of farmland by the State Agriculture Development Committee. With assistance from FPP, the New Jersey Audubon Society, the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization, the New Jersey Conservation Fund, and Warren County's farmland preservation program, New Jersey's Department of Agriculture kept the farm in agriculture. Eyed by developers since the 1980s, the River Walk Farm will now be leased to a farmer who will grow crops, as well as harvest certain types of grasses to support the breeding and migration of the threatened and endangered birds.

"It (The River Walk purchase) was a big and complicated deal," Riverview member Laura Oltman said. "It's not going to be a housing development, and that's the best part."

## Farmland Protection Program New Jersey Summary

**Overview** The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting

conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the conservation easement to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

**Accomplishments** In 1996, the first year of the 1996 Farm Bill, New Jersey received \$1 million for farmland protection through the Federal Farmland Protection Program (FPP). Thirteen farms across the state were preserved with financial assistance from the federal government. FPP funds were combined with New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program and local preservation funds. In 1998 New Jersey received an additional \$1.4 million in FPP funds. The funds were allocated to assist with preservation of 2,444 acres on 16 farms throughout New Jersey. Twenty-three farms are predicted to be protected with \$734,800 of 2001 funds.

**Outlook** In 1999 Governor Whitman signed into law the Garden State Preservation Trust Act to greatly enhance preservation efforts. This act became a national model for farmland and open space preservation. The law set the framework for preserving an additional 500,000 acres of farmland over 10 years. The result will be the permanent preservation of 40% of New Jersey's total landmass. As of June 2000, 432 farms covering 64,739 acres had been permanently preserved under the program. In the first 3 years of the 1996 Farm Bill, New Jersey received \$2.6 million or approximately 8% of the funds allocated to the FPP through the Commodity Credit Corporation. NRCS staff worked closely with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the State Agriculture Development Committee to assure that the farms selected for federal funding represent the highest ranked farm in each



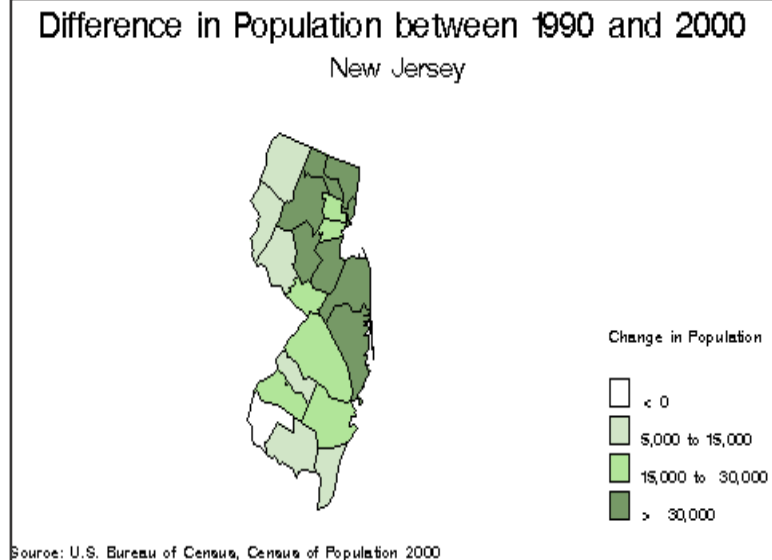
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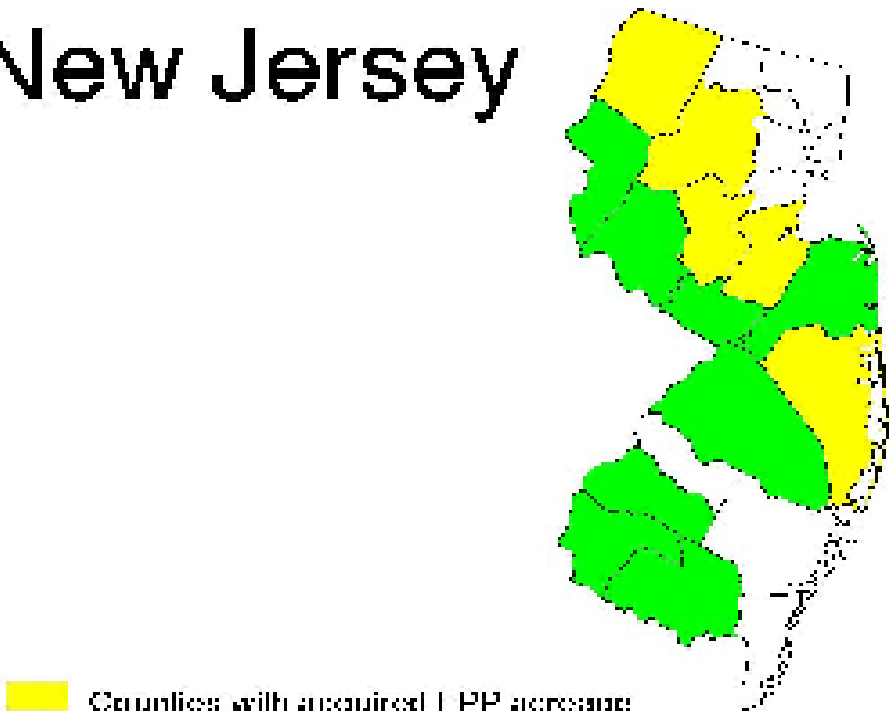
Photo by:  
James Luzader, NRCS

**Farmland Protection Program  
New Jersey Easements  
(As of December 2001)**

County	Acres	Easement Cost		Federal Payment \$	%
		Total (\$)	Average (\$/acre)		
Burlington	889	\$2,655,705	\$2,987	\$336,908	13%
Cumberland	195	\$431,982	\$2,215	\$54,027	13%
Gloucester	359	\$966,915	\$2,693	\$121,991	13%
Hunterdon	880	\$5,071,384	\$5,763	\$439,780	9%
Mercer	227	\$2,151,975	\$9,480	\$256,333	12%
Middlesex	553	\$4,613,218	\$8,342	\$501,169	11%
Monmouth	349	\$2,113,727	\$6,057	\$227,110	11%
Morris	130	\$897,331	\$6,903	\$104,009	12%
Ocean	399	\$956,499	\$2,397	\$182,751	19%
Salem	1,703	\$3,014,478	\$1,770	\$337,184	11%
Somerset	116	\$886,971	\$7,646	\$108,237	12%
Sussex	725	\$1,298,540	\$1,791	\$170,924	13%
Warren	1,259	\$3,665,965	\$2,912	\$494,376	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,784</b>	<b>\$28,724,690</b>	<b>\$3,690</b>	<b>\$3,334,799</b>	<b>12%</b>



# New Jersey



- Counties with acquired FPP acreage
- Counties with both acquired and pending FPP acreage



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